

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13), just back from a four-day visit to Afghanistan, said he will support an increase in American troops to fight the Taliban and prevent Al Qaeda from regaining a foothold in that country.

Buchanan was among six bipartisan members of Congress who visited Afghanistan over the weekend.

“The Taliban is a destabilizing force in Afghanistan with ties to Al Qaeda,” said Buchanan. “They are a threat to the United States. We need to provide additional combat troops in the region to enable the counterinsurgency strategy focusing both on al Qaeda and the Taliban to succeed.”

Buchanan said the administration should give “strong consideration” to General McChrystal’s request for 40,000 additional troops as well as other experts and that the troop level should be based on “the appropriate level to accomplish their mission.”

The 13th District Congressman and other members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee joined members of the House Armed Services Committee to visit the troops and meet with military officials.

“I am extremely proud of the troops,” said Buchanan. “They are highly skilled, motivated and confident that with additional troops they can achieve their mission.”

Buchanan noted that Afghanistan's election commission declared President Hamid Karzai the winner of the election after his challenger pulled out of a runoff that had been scheduled for this coming Saturday.

“With the election behind us, I am hopeful that the country of Afghanistan will move forward in a positive direction to clean up government, reduce corruption and ensure fair and open elections in the future,” added Buchanan.

Buchanan and U.S. Reps. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU); Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-52nd-CA); Rep. Larry Kissell (D-8th-NC), Rep. John Adler (D-3rd-NJ); and Rep. Christopher Lee (R-NY-26); left Washington, D.C. late Thursday, October 29 and returned early on Monday, November 2. During the fact-finding trip, they visited Kabul, Regional Command South at Camp Bastion, Regional Command East at Bagram Airbase and KIA.

This is Buchanan’s second trip to Afghanistan. The two-term Member of Congress went to Iraq and Afghanistan in April of 2007.



In Afghanistan With Some Members of the Army’s Airborne Division.



Graduate of Riverview HS in Sarasota, Audrey Smith, currently serving in Afghanistan.



Sarasota Military Academy graduate, Joe Reynolds, currently serving in Afghanistan.



With Some Members of the Army's Airborne Division.



Boarding the transport helicopter with some true American Heroes. So proud of our soldiers